

American Renaissance

There is not a truth existing which I fear, or would wish unknown to the whole world.

—Thomas Jefferson

Vol. 2, No. 9

September 1991

What Makes a Nation: The Case of Japan

An expert's two-part report on a country that is doing a few things right.

by Steven Howell

Let us be honest: The Japanese have left us behind. Americans are bad losers and prefer not to admit it, but in nearly every way, Japan puts us to shame. Whether it is crime rates, literacy, GNP growth, investment rates, life expectancy, or even the yearly number of patents per capita, Japan is well ahead of us and of nearly everyone else.

Unlike the United States, which is worried about the future, always slipping behind and cutting back, Japan is optimistic. Only 45 years after B-29s nearly destroyed it, Japan is bursting with energy—investing, building, expanding, ready for the future. Before long, a few rocky islands in the Pacific could be the dominant economic and cultural force in the world. How have the Japanese done it?

People who visit Japan are tempted to think that the Japanese are just like us. They dress like Westerners, they build skyscrapers, they believe in efficiency, and listen to Beethoven. Many of them even speak English. Virtually every analysis of Japanese success therefore concentrates on such things as fiscal policy and management techniques. This is no more useful than explaining American ghetto poverty in terms of federal jobs programs.

Not Like Us

I have spent many years in Japan. The Japanese are not like us. In some

ways, they are as we used to be, and in others they are unlike anything we have ever been. But the essential thing is that Japan is, and will always be, *Japanese*. It has an almost 19th century sense of nationhood, and a fierce resolve to maintain its national traditions, come what may. Unlike Americans or common-market



Europeans, Japanese have a near-instinctual sense of who they are. This gives Japan the community and purpose that will carry it well into the next century.

Uniqueness

Japanese have an almost touching, “Wogs-begin-at-Calais” conviction of their own uniqueness. No people in the world spends as much time meditating on, glorying in, or apologizing for its singularity. There is an entire publishing genre one might call “theory-of-the-Japanese,” in which authors agonize happily over

how inscrutable Japanese are to everyone else.

Naturally, a highly developed sense of uniqueness requires a sharp distinction between Japanese and others. Even in the 17th century, Japanese were so determined to keep their land untainted by foreigners that they closed themselves off to the world for two centuries. Their forced re-entry into international affairs in 1853 did not essentially change their sense of separateness. The rule is simple: The only way to become Japanese is to be born that way.

The best illustration of this is the way Japan treats resident Koreans. Many Koreans migrated to Japan between 1910 and 1945, when Korea was part of the empire. There are now thousands of third-generation Koreans, who look, act, and sound just like Japanese. They have permanent legal residency but they are not citizens. They cannot vote or hold government jobs, and most Japanese would rather not marry or employ them. Lately, there has been some liberal clucking in the press about this, but the general feeling is that if Koreans don't like it, they can always go back to Korea, which is where they belong.

The word “nation” comes from the Latin *natio*, meaning “race” or “breed,” and from *nasci*, meaning “to be born.” Japanese feel this vividly. No matter how “Japanese” a third-generation Korean may seem, his cultural pedigree is alien. I have asked Japanese how many generations it would take before Koreans would really be Japanese. They look at me as if I were stupid, and say, “They'd always be Korean.”

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Letters from Readers

Sir — Miss Richards' review in the August issue prompted me to read Larry Auster's *The Path to National Suicide*, which I had ordered some time ago. It is just as intelligently and gracefully argued as she reported, and I have seldom spent a more worthwhile three dollars. It is true that despite some very keen observations on the subject of race, Mr. Auster stops just short of the conclusion towards which logic seems to impel him; that any race-blind immigration policy will eventually destroy the character of our nation. Nevertheless, in a book offered to the general public, it may be best to let readers draw their own subversive conclusions.

Miss Richards did not mention this, but Mr. Auster also touches on a different subject that is very important. On page 48, he writes: "Even if there were no immigration at all, America would still be experiencing what can only be called a terrifying social and moral decline." This is a tantalizing sentence, with which anyone who has a sense of the past is likely to agree. Nevertheless, since Mr. Auster does not elaborate, it is impossible to know whether he and I are terrified by the same declines. I hope that Mr. Auster will some day write another book, on the larger subject of why so many of the virtues our ancestors took for granted have largely disappeared.

Be that as it may, Mr. Auster goes on to point out that other nations have, in the past, recovered from grievous collapse, but only because their national identities, "the spiritual spark of their civilizations," had survived. In the United States, not only is there little sense of decay, or urgency about

the need for renewal; massive non-white immigration could snuff out the spiritual sparks that are still burning. Name Withheld, Frankfort, Ky.

Mr. Auster has promised to write a reply to Miss Richards' review of his book. We look forward very much to publishing it in the next issue. — Editor

Sir — As a charter subscriber to *AR*, I have grown accustomed to anticipating each new issue with great pleasure. I am sure that you and your staff have received many compliments on your fine articles and always fascinating book reviews. However, I would like to send a specific thank you to whomever is responsible for the wonderful, witty, always apt art work. It is a constant source of delight. I enclose my renewal check with the anticipation that your artistic inclinations will continue to grow and flourish.

Joy McGuire, Asheville, N.C.

Sir — Your August cover story on Detroit was chilling. I weep for my country to think that people actually come from all over the world to watch Americans set fire to their own city every Halloween. What must they think of us?

I live in Los Angeles, another city that lost its white majority long ago, and one that better reflects the ethnic future of the United States than does Detroit. I assume that you will include *The City of the Angels* in your series on American cities.

In that connection, I wish to call your attention to a forthcoming book

to be published by Simon & Schuster, called *Los Angeles—Capital of the Third World*. According to advance reports, it is an unblinking account of unchecked illegal immigration and the social collapse this has brought about. I hope you will consider reviewing it. Andrew Nagy, Los Angeles, Cal.

Sir — In your August issue you note that the NAACP has accused insurance companies of "racism," because they charge more to insure an automobile in 70 percent-black Detroit than they do to insure a vehicle in the white suburbs. Obviously, the insurance companies do this because they must cover themselves against higher theft and accident rates.

Your readers may not know this, but at one time life insurance companies discriminated—with good reason—by race. Blacks, partly because of bad health habits, do not live as long as whites do. Insurance companies charged them the statistically appropriate supplement on life insurance premiums. Years ago, this practice was found to be "racist," and life insurers may no longer adjust premiums according to race. This means that whites pay slightly higher rates to subsidize cheaper rates for blacks.

Karl Humphries, Hopewell, N.J.



"What-is-Racism" Issue Reprinted

We have had so many requests for extra copies of the July issue of *AR* that we have reprinted it. The price per copy is \$2.50, which includes postage. For orders of ten or more, the price is \$2.00 per copy.

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Japanese are just as suspicious of their countrymen who have emigrated. Someone who has left Japan to live in Brazil or the United States has forever renounced his status as a Japanese. Should he or his descendants ever want to come back to Japan, they would be just as unwelcome as Koreans. Japanese who



Sword hilt, 19th century.

emigrate know this, and they throw themselves wholeheartedly into the culture of their new homeland.

Japanese and Race

Since Japanese feel so distant from people who are racially and culturally indistinguishable from themselves, it is not hard to imagine how they feel about people who are obviously different. In 1986, the then-Prime Minister of Japan, Yasuhiro Nakasone, casually mentioned to a group of journalists that large numbers of blacks and Hispanics were a drag on the American economy and made the country less competitive. Although the remark provoked outrage in

America, in Japan, it was accepted as obviously true.

In 1990, when a cabinet minister congratulated the police on clearing the sex trade out of a residential neighborhood, he likened the arrival of prostitutes to the appearance of blacks in an all-white neighborhood. They lower the tone, he said, and the solid citizens clear out. American commentators choked with anger. Of course, whites have fled a thousand American communities that were turning black, but Japanese cabinet ministers are presumably not supposed to have noticed.

A distaste for blacks is nothing new. One of the consequences of the post-war occupation of Japan was a crop of mixed-race children, left behind when the Americans went home. The half-white children were grudgingly tolerated. The ones who were half-black were bundled off to Brazil, along with their mothers.

Linguistically, culturally, and racially, Japan is one of the most homogeneous countries in the world. This means that it never even thinks about dozens of problems that are worrying America nearly to death. Since Japan has only one race, no one ever uses the word "racism." There was no "civil rights movement," no integration struggle, and no court-ordered busing. There is no bilingual education, and no affirmative action.

There is no tyranny of "political correctness." No one is clamoring for a "multi-cultural curriculum," and no one wants to rewrite history. When a company needs to hire someone, it doesn't give a thought to "ethnic balance;" it just hires the best person

for the job. No one has ever been sent to a reeducation seminar because of "insensitivity."

Japan has no Civil Rights Commission and no Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. It has no Equal Housing Act or Equal Voting Rights Act. No one worries about drawing up voting districts to make sure that minorities get elected. Japan has no noisy ethnic groups trying to influence foreign policy. Japanese haven't the slightest idea what a "hate crime" could be. There is no end to the things Japanese *don't* have to worry about.

And put that way, one wonders what half the people in America would do for a living or what journalists would think to write about, if it weren't for the looming presence of race. The time, money, effort, and agony that Americans lavish on race doesn't tighten a single bolt or bake a single bun, and Japanese can put the effort to productive use.

"Progressive" Americans believe that a great deal of racial scurrying



Sword hilt, 19th century.

around is somehow good for us, and they work themselves into self-righteous frenzies over the Japanese compulsion to draw boundaries between themselves and others. Of course, an insistence on boundaries is one of Japan's greatest and most obvious strengths. Though Americans have been trained to pretend otherwise, it is a natural part of any healthy society. Nothing in Japan would be the same if Japanese did not draw such a firm line at the water's edge. ●

Steven Howell is the pen name of a consultant to American companies doing business in Japan. He speaks fluent Japanese and is the author of a book about the Japanese national character. The second part of his article will appear in the October issue.

The Animal in the Man

Carl N. Degler, *In Search of Human Nature*, Oxford University Press, 1991, 400 pp., \$24.95

reviewed by Thomas Jackson

Current assumptions about the nature of man are based as much on ideology as on research.



In *In Search of Human Nature*, by Professor Carl Degler of Stanford University, is an attempt to understand how environment displaced heredity as the accepted explanation for human behavior. It would be hard to think of an intellectual revolution that has so profoundly influenced social policy, and it is high time it attracted the attention of a historian as eminent as Prof. Degler.

His book is also a cautious account of how biology, after its virtual elimination as an influence on human behavior, has finally begun to regain some of the ground it lost to the champions of environment. The questions Prof. Degler raises are the very ones that have been forced underground: Are men and women different by nature? Are the races equally intelligent? Is eugenics moral? Is man formed more by his genes than by his environment? The search for human nature has great consequences, for the societies that men build reflect the answers they think they have found.

For the most part, Prof. Degler answers the taboo questions exactly as the current intellectual climate requires. Nevertheless, even if he lifts the lid of Pandora's box only to slam it shut again, he gives us a glimpse of where resurgent biology might lead.

He has drawn a rough map of the intellectual landscape, and though he warns us away from certain regions, there is some good merely in pointing out that they exist.

In Search of Human Nature is in two parts. The first and vastly better one traces the currents of thought that unthroned the view that biology governs behavior. The second part, which describes the new legitimacy of biology, is distinctly inferior. Whereas Prof. Degler has combed the archives for trenchant nature/nurture arguments of 50 or 100 years ago, his references to contemporary studies are embarrassingly one-sided and only serve current academic fashion.

Biology Regnant

In the first part of his book Prof. Degler explains that it was Charles Darwin (1809-1882) and Gregor Mendel (1822-1884) who laid the foundations for the view that natural laws apply to men just as they do to animals. Darwin taught that man is a product of the same forces that created other living things: all are the result of millions of years of random evolution during which only the fittest survived. Though his influence came later,

No other intellectual revolution has so profoundly influenced social policy.

Mendel demonstrated the inevitable link between the biological characteristics of one generation and the next.

These new doctrines could explain social class. If only the fit survive and prosper, the rich and powerful must have gotten that way because they were particularly fit. Darwin thought that evolution not only explained social hierarchy but justified it. It would be folly to try to raise the pauper to the level of the merchant if the pauper did

not have the necessary biological endowment.

Likewise, no one needed to devise elaborate environmental explanations for different levels of achievement by race. Darwin thought that the races



did not have the same average levels of intelligence. If the pauper was poor because he had bad genes, the primitive races were likewise shortchanged.

Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), worked these ideas into a system known as "Social Darwinism." Government should interfere as little as possible with the struggle for survival, and should never tax the productive in order to subsidize the unproductive. Nor should individuals be too free with misguided charity. As Spencer put it: "To aid the bad in multiplying is, in effect, the same as maliciously providing for our descendants a multitude of enemies." He thought that no environment could make up for debauched genes.

Better Breeding

Darwinism and genetics led to the eugenics movement. Although it is now condemned as sinister and right wing, Prof. Degler points out that in the early part of the 20th century it was thought progressive and humanitarian. Socialists were among its ardent proponents, and some of the most respected people of the time supported it. Winston Churchill was vice president of the International Congress of Eugenics, as was Charles

Eliot, president of Harvard. Selective breeding had vastly improved the stock of domestic animals; eugenicists believed that people could be likewise improved.

By 1930, thirty American states had passed laws that allowed for the involuntary sterilization of such people as "confirmed criminals, idiots, imbeciles, and rapists." Germany, England, and the Scandinavian countries also passed eugenics laws—all before Hitler came to power.

The Great Shift

Today, eugenics is in malodorous disrepute, environment explains behavior, the races are equal, poverty explains low I.Q. rather than the reverse, and governments routinely tax the competent so that the incompetent can multiply. What caused so revolutionary a change?

The attack on biology got under way in the 1920s, and no one is more responsible for its success than Franz Boas (1858-1942). He was a tireless proponent of the idea that environment, not biology, governed behavior. A Jewish immigrant from Germany, he established the study of anthropology in America more or less single-handedly, and ruled the discipline from its headquarters at Columbia University.

Boas would be delighted with the United States as it is today. He worked mightily for an open immigration policy, and championed the cause of Negro equality. He believed that intermarriage was the ultimate solu-



tion to racial problems and was convinced that human ailments could be solved by deftly tuning the environment. Biology was irrelevant.

What is Prejudice?

A reader takes up where our July cover story left off.

by Ralph Jones

In his article, "What is Racism?", Thomas Jackson exposes some of the distortions in the ways in which "racism" is currently defined. In fact, there are a number of other words whose meanings have been similarly distorted.

Take, for example, the word "prejudice." This means reaching a conclusion before all the facts are in. Of course, all the facts are rarely in.

I may call a person prejudiced if I think he should have gathered more evidence or examined it more closely. He may even have refused to examine the evidence at all or, in extreme cases, maintain an opinion in the face of what I would regard as decisive evidence to the contrary. This definition of prejudice would fit a man who refused to hire someone of another race, only because of the unexamined assumption that *all* people of that race were incapable of doing the job.

Nevertheless, the definition also fits egalitarians. There is no need to go into detail about the large body of evidence suggesting that the races of man differ substantially and innately. Suffice it to say that egalitarians ignore this evidence or, at the very least, hold it to impossibly high standards of proof. They then have the temerity to say that anyone who has examined the evidence of inequality and been persuaded by it is "prejudiced."

"Discrimination" is another word that has changed in meaning. In the strictest sense, it means to assign things (or events or anything else) to classes. A "discriminating" man used to be one who was admired because of his reliable ability to assign things to subtle categories of the desirable and undesirable.

Discrimination becomes illegitimate if the assignment is based

on a rigid adherence to unproven assumptions. Once again, to assign all members of a race to the class of "criminals" or "incompetents," is not merely to discriminate, but to discriminate unfairly.

However, in a racial context, discrimination has taken on a new meaning: that of preference for one's own kind. Such a preference may be the result of much gathering of evidence and reflection, but it may not. I may simply *prefer* the traits that are characteristic of my group, without having thought a great deal about the separate evolution of peoples or the possibility of innate differences.

It is this confusion of preference with prejudice that so well serves egalitarian moralizing. Whites (but only whites) have been persuaded that such preference is the same as illegitimate discrimination. In fact, it is so natural a feeling that it must be something akin to instinct.

A warm regard for the special achievements of one's own race may entail a misunderstanding or even the disparagement of the special achievements of other races. This is normal and even healthy. A student of patriotism once observed that all nations think themselves superior to their neighbors—and that all nations are right. There is a loyalty to one's own kind that is deeply rooted in differences. So long as there are differences there will be loyalties.

What whites need most is something that non-whites have never lost. That is the conviction that their preferences are not only natural, but *healthy and moral*. The moral initiative must be seized from the egalitarians, who have turned the preferences of whites (but not those of other races) into "prejudice." We need a critical mass of brave men and women who no longer deny the differences between races and, without malice to others, embrace their preferences. ●



to do the "waggle dance" that tells other bees where to find food, what possibilities might people be born with?

Prof. Degler therefore devotes 100 pages of his second section to the insights we have recently gained from the resurgence of biology. It is here that his work is spotty. After having explained in great detail how the Boas school discredited eugenics, racial differences, and even heredity, he says virtually nothing about recent work in these fields.

What then, are the new breakthroughs that Prof. Degler has found illuminated by biology? The incest taboo, he says, is now generally accepted as something close to instinct because animals refuse to mate with close kin. Human social rankings may also reflect biology because animals have "pecking orders." The willingness of people to sacrifice themselves for their families also has a parallel among animals and may be part of human nature. All very interesting, but hardly shocking.

The only remotely controversial view that Prof. Degler airs is the possibility that men may be more aggressive than women because of hormones rather than because of what they learned in kindergarten. This might

It is a sad day when a distinguished historian writes a book that distorts history.

even explain why men dominate certain fields.

What happened to racial differences, eugenics, and heredity? Since Prof. Degler has pointed out that these were discredited, not because of new data but because of an ideological interpretation of old data, one expects him to explain recent thinking in these fields. Instead, he suggests that today's "sociobiologists" are not interested in racial differences, for example, because they study traits common to all people. Also, they are likely to be political liberals who have "disturbing memories of the evil misuse of such inquiries in the recent past."

This is disingenuous on two counts. First, there is a great deal of interest in genetics and racial differences. Second, everyone knows that to take a

public position on the wrong side of orthodoxy is to risk professional oblivion. Any connection between race, sex, heredity, and social policy has been cast into the outer darkness and anyone who thinks about it is



Nature or nurture?

shunned as not merely wrong but wicked. Scholars are punished for politically incorrect research, and everyone knows it.

For this reason alone, it is significant that so many scholars have dared to flout convention. Evidence is constantly coming to light of the heritability of intelligence, of racial differences, and of biological predispositions towards criminality and even personality type. For the most part, *In Search of Human Nature* primly ignores it.

For example, Audrey Shuey's work in the 1950s and 1960s that culminated in her magisterial *The Testing of Negro Intelligence* gets no acknowledgement. Nor does John Baker's work on the anthropology of race or that of his fellow Englishman, Hans Eysenck, on IQ. Richard Herrnstein's studies of the biology of criminality are regretfully and briefly mentioned, but Arthur Jensen is disposed of in a single footnote! Mark Snyderman gets a short mention for an obscure study on immigration legislation, but there is no reference to his 1988 book, *The IQ Controversy* (reviewed in *AR*, Nov. and Dec., 1990), that patiently presents the evidence for racial differences.

William Shockley's work gets no notice, nor does that of Raymond Cat-

tell (see *AR*, Feb., March, and April, 1991). Prof. Degler writes nothing about Thomas J. Bouchard's recent, compelling work on identical twins separated at birth. Although their most prominent activities may be too recent to be included in a book published this year, the exclusion of Philippe Rushton of the University of Western Ontario and of Michael Levin of the City College of New York would be entirely consistent with Prof. Degler's selective scholarship.

In Search of Human Nature poses as a dispassionate history of ideas. Its style is professorial and its tone is detached. For this reason it is especially indefensible that Prof. Degler should deliberately (and surely it was no accident) exclude the work of scholars whose views he finds inconvenient. They are very much part of the history of ideas, and a historian must grapple with them, if only in an attempt to refute them. When an author is prepared to accuse the Boas school of giving the data an ideological coloring, it is all the more disappointing to find that he himself has chosen simply to ignore recalcitrant data.

Prof. Degler gives the false impression that practically no one is studying certain fields. On questions of race, especially, he implies that this is because everyone agrees that people like Boas and Klineberg are the final authorities. In his defense, it is possible that Prof. Degler could not have published a book that did not hew to the glib orthodoxies of our era. Nevertheless, it is a sad day when a distinguished historian writes, for whatever reasons, a book that distorts history. ●



Moving?

Please remember to send change-of-address notice.

O Tempora, O Mores!

Tale of the Tape

Nearly everyone in America has seen the videotape of white (and Hispanic) Los Angeles policemen beating Rodney King, a black motorist. Virtually no one has seen the recent videos of Detroit blacks beating white women.

Two similar incidents took place at a July 4th fireworks display. In the first, a crowd of blacks—mostly women—suddenly started beating three white women. They shouted, “Oh, look at the pretty little white girls,” and “Get the white bitch,” as they knocked all three to the ground. The whites were eventually saved by passersby, but were refused protection by the police when they asked for an escort out of the crowd. Some of the attackers then chased and taunted them as they returned to their car.

The same amateur cameraman recorded another attack, in which a 46-year-old white woman was beaten to the ground. Some of the same blacks can be identified in both attacks, and three teen-agers have been arrested.

These tapes were shown very briefly on local Detroit television, but got no national air time. We can be certain that if anyone had recorded an attack by whites on blacks, it would have gotten the full, Rodney King treatment.

Art Attack

“Art” is increasingly put to the task of attacking the very idea that there is such a thing as a core American culture. The Whitney Museum in downtown Manhattan has mounted a show called “Constructing American Identity.” As the opening paragraph of the exhibit brochure explains, “Distinctions of race, gender, and sexuality have been shown to be rooted in particular social and class practices rather than preexistent categories. The creation of a ‘mainstream’ marginalizes certain forms of cultural production and implicitly fulfills the ideological needs of dominant social powers.” The brochure goes on to

praise the “multicultural approach,” and explains that the show is part of a movement “to destabilize the notion of a [cultural] mainstream.”



Of course, it is hard to change people's minds just by showing them paintings, as this exhibit does, from American collections of 30 and 60 years ago. It is the commentary forced onto the paintings that is pure politics. As art critic Hilton Kramer has pointed out, the study of art history has been turned into a branch of the social sciences, which have always been heavily politicized.

Return of Eugenics

At one time, eugenics was in high esteem in the United States, and 30 states had laws calling for the sterilization of undesirables (see book review, page 4). A recent *Los Angeles Times* survey asked Californians if they thought female drug-users of child-bearing age should be forced to use the implantable contraceptive, Norplant. Sixty-one percent thought it was a good idea. Interestingly, Hispanics, at 70 percent, were more likely than either blacks or whites, at 60 percent each, to support mandatory Norplant. Even a narrow majority of people who described themselves as “liberals” favored the idea.

In 1937, a poll in *Fortune* magazine found that 63 percent of Americans were in favor of sterilizing habitual criminals. The American people haven't lost their good sense; their legislators have.

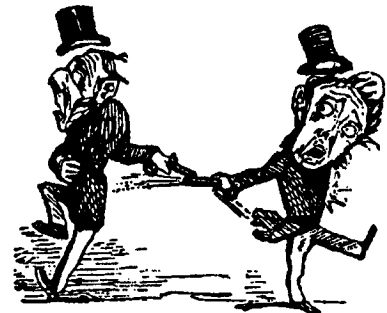
African Heroin

Heroin is making its way into the United States from a new source: Africa. The trade is little known outside of law enforcement circles, because African smugglers have not been violent, and do not handle cocaine, which attracts more attention.

Customs agents note that a large proportion of smugglers use their official positions in attempts to escape detection. Billy Eko, the chief pilot of Nigeria Airways was recently arrested in New York with 10 pounds of heroin in his pockets. A purser with the same airline had five pounds tucked inside a radio.

Falling Life Expectancy

The life expectancy of American blacks has fallen for the fourth year in a row. In 1988, the most recent year for which figures are complete, life expectancy for whites was 75.6 years—the same as the year before, and 69.2 years for blacks—a decline of 0.2 years. The black decline was enough to cause overall life expectancy in the United States to fall for the first time in decades.



The main cause of the black decline was a sharp increase in homicide deaths. Blacks between the ages of 15 and 24 were seven times more likely than whites to be victims of homicide. Homicide was the *leading* cause of death for all blacks between the ages of 15 and 44. Virtually all blacks are killed by other blacks.

Smarter or Just More Honest?

According to a poll reported in *Newsweek* of August 6, 14 percent of Chicago blacks think blacks have less "inborn ability to learn than whites." Only 9 percent of whites said they thought this. *Newsweek* goes on to quote experts who blame a bad black self-image on white racism.

Keeping it in the Family

If blacks prefer to do business with each other rather than let their money fall into the hands of whites, they will soon be able to consult *SuccessGuide*, a listing of black organizations, businesses, and services. *SuccessGuide* has been licensed to 14 cities, including Atlanta, Chicago, Detroit, New York, Washington, and Los Angeles, and should appear shortly.

Protecting Lawbreakers

The U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission has mounted a national campaign to tell illegal Hispanic immigrants that they are protected from job discrimination. The campaign emphasizes that the EEOC has no interest in a person's immigration status, and welcomes complaints from anyone. It promises to keep all information secret from the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The campaign includes written materials in Spanish, lectures by Spanish-speaking officials, and a toll-free telephone line manned by Spanish-speakers.

The Power of Example

David Dinkins, New York City's first black mayor, ran for office with the promise that he would do more than ever for the needy. In his inaugural address, he announced to throngs gathered at City Hall that, "our most powerful weapon is example."

Mayor Dinkins' tax returns show that in 1990 he earned \$217,219 and gave \$475 to charity. \$350 of this was his valuation of "clothes and household goods" that he gave to the Salvation Army. Mayor Dinkins is only conforming to the current standard of what passes for "compassion:"

He is happy to do more for the needy with your money.



On the other hand, we should be pleased that Mayor Dinkins actually filled in a tax form for 1990. Some time back, he went for four straight years without bothering to file at all.

Anthropology in Brooklyn

Secretary Jack Kemp of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has decided that one of the problems with public housing is the number of low lifes who live in it and spoil things for the other tenants. He has started evicting known crack dealers as part of a plan to spruce up the projects. All was going well until he ran into Judge Jack Weinstein of Brooklyn.

The feds had found a Brooklyn grandmother living in a public housing apartment with her grown daughters and 12 grandchildren. No one in the household was married and all were getting public assistance. Some of them—it hasn't yet been proven how many—were supplementing their monthly check by selling a great deal of crack cocaine. Several have already pleaded guilty.

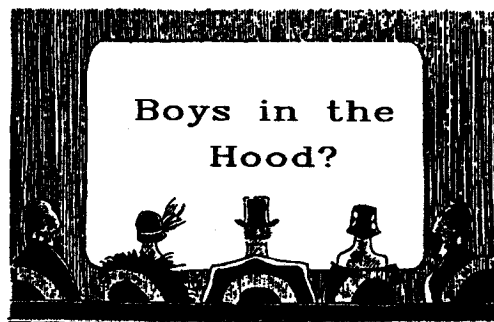
HUD then filed a civil suit to get the miscreants out of the apartment. A high-priced New York law firm, Sullivan & Cromwell, offered to defend them for free, and made a novel argument that convinced Judge Weinstein. He found that this was a "matriarchal family," of the kind that has become the norm among a certain class of Americans, and that eviction would disrupt family ties.

One can't help wondering how Judge Weinstein—or the pro bono Sullivan & Cromwell lawyers—would like it if they learned that tenants in their apartment buildings were running crack dens but could not be evicted for fear of straining family ties.

Life Imitates Art

"Boyz N the Hood," a black-made film about black gangs, opened in July to widespread violence just as "New Jack City" had done four months earlier. Shootings in 20 of the 829 theaters in which it opened left one person dead and 33 wounded. The director gave the usual excuses for the violence. Twenty-three year-old John Singleton claimed that American society "breeds illiteracy and economic deprivation," and spoke of "a whole generation of people who are disenfranchised."

In fact, it would be a mistake to blame the film for the violence it provoked. The young blacks who were shooting each other in theaters would probably have been shooting each other somewhere else if they had not been at the movies. In Los Angeles, for example, in the two-week period during which "Boyz N the Hood" opened, there were 47 murders. They got virtually no attention, whereas the gunfire at Los Angeles theaters—none of it fatal—was first-page news. It is only the locale, and the possibility



that ordinary people might be caught in the cross fire, that makes these shootings newsworthy.

The unhappy truth is that any event that attracts a large number of young urban blacks is likely to turn violent. Several years ago, rap concerts were in the news for the same kind of violence. The reason we don't read about rap concert violence any more is that most large halls refuse to book rappers.

They don't want to put on shows that may result in killings, and even if they did, the insurance premiums are too high.

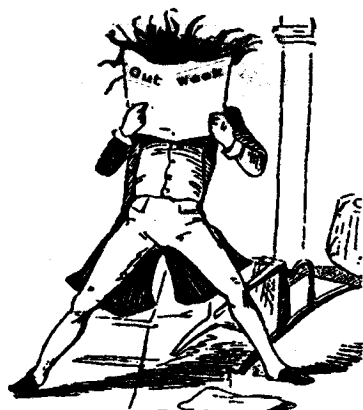
A Czech Gets it Right

"The more the fight for human rights gains in popularity, the more it loses any concrete content, becoming a kind of universal stance of everyone toward everything, a kind of energy that turns all human desires into rights ... The desire for love the right to love, the desire for rest the right to rest, the desire for friendship the right to friendship, the desire to exceed the speed limit the right to exceed the speed limit, the desire for happiness the right to happiness, the desire to publish a book the right to publish a book, the desire to shout in the street in the middle of the night the right to shout in the street."

—Milan Kundera, in his new novel, *Immortality*

Unexpected Allies

A certain number of activist homosexuals have decided that the word "gay" is no longer combative enough. They have revived an old term of derision and have started calling themselves "queers." The most ardent group, Queer Nation, has the motto, "We're Queer/We're here/Get used to it."



Some of the new militants wish to reserve the word exclusively for their own use. "I am not for any straight writer using the word 'queer' in a mainstream publication," says Donna Minkowitz, who writes for *The Village Voice*; "This is our word. I can say it, but you can't."

It is the editor of a homosexual magazine called *Outweek*, however, who makes the most convincing case for general rehabilitation of the word. Says Gabriel Rotello: "When you're trying to describe the community and you have to list gays, lesbians, bisexuals, drag queens, transsexuals (post-op and pre), it gets unwieldy. Queer says it all." So it does.

George Bush on America

On April 13th of this year, President George Bush delivered a speech in Montgomery (AL), in which he stated, in the clearest possible terms, his conception of what America means. It is certainly different from that of the founding fathers, who wrote the Constitution to "secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity."

"What defines this nation?" asked the President. "What makes us America is not our ties to a piece of territory or bonds of blood; what makes us American is our allegiance to an idea that all people everywhere must be free." No, it is not a shared culture, a common history, a sense of peoplehood, or anything else that has always defined nations. Think one particular thing (and an entirely abstract one at that), and anyone can be an American.

The Weight of Ideology

Orange County has traditionally been an oasis of Caucasian tranquility in the ethnic stew that Los Angeles has become. Like every other such oasis, Orange County is changing. Though the 1990 census shows that the county is still 65 percent white, this is a sharp drop from the figures of ten years ago.

The shifting racial makeup has brought the usual consequences. The welfare case load has grown faster in Orange County than in any other part of California. Though non-whites are 35 percent of the population, they account for 67 percent of all welfare cases. These include at least 3,000 children of illegal immigrants. Medi-Cal, the state's program of free medicine for indigents, has been tapped by at least 12,000 illegals. Despite their reputation elsewhere as high achievers, more than a quarter of

the Indochinese population is on welfare.



Lawrence Leaman, who directs the county's social services, is careful to avoid drawing the wrong conclusions. "It would be easy to take these numbers and turn the issue into some red-neck viewpoint that minorities are pulling us down, but that's not the picture," he says. He explains that the problem is one of demographics rather than of ethnicity, a distinction that may be too subtle for some.

Hands Across the Water

Prominent black leaders recently met in the Ivory Coast for three days of what was billed as the first African—African American Summit. The Americans promised the Africans that they would establish a black lobby in the United States that would be just as powerful as the Jewish lobby.

Five African presidents, two prime ministers, and a host of lesser ministers roared their approval as Rev. Leon Sullivan of Philadelphia vowed to make debt forgiveness the lobby's first priority. African countries are thought to owe the U.S. government approximately \$100 billion, but conferees from both America and Africa agreed that it should not have to be paid back. American blacks also said that they would demand that they be allowed to hold dual citizenship with African countries, so that blacks would, as Rev. Sullivan put it, have "some place to go."

The American participants were clearly having a jolly time, but some of the Africans doubted that a powerful Africa lobby would materialize. "Most of them look as though they're just having a good holiday," observed one Ghanaian official. ●